

NCDA&CS Regional Agronomists

The goal of the Field Services Section is to promote agronomically sound nutrient use and nematode management, thereby optimizing crop production and fostering agricultural sustainability. Thirteen regional agronomists (RAs) work toward this end by advocating proper use of agronomic testing services (Figure 1). Agronomic Division tests include soil testing, nematode assay, plant tissue analysis, waste analysis and solution analysis.

RAs are crop advisors within the state department of agriculture. Unlike Cooperative Extension, which covers a broad agricultural spectrum, RAs focus on a narrower, well-defined set of issues. Their mandate is to

provide guidance on crop nutrient and/or plant-parasitic nematode problems, specifically with regard to the use of Agronomic Division laboratory services.

North Carolina is unique in having its agronomic testing laboratories housed within the state department of agriculture instead of the state university. It is also one of very few states to offer five types of tests for minimal fees, if any. RAs not only provide education and assistance with regard to the use of these services but also bring valuable feedback about field situations to laboratory and professional staff.

RAs, however, do much more than provide advice to farmers. Their services are vital to nursery professionals, landscapers, park and golf course superintendents, municipal

waste facilities, agricultural consultants, soil conservationists and water quality specialists, to name a few. RAs are a highly experienced source of information on North Carolina soil and crop nutrient issues.

RAs specialize in lime needs, crop fertilization; soil amendment; timing of harvest; source water or nutrient solution evaluation; compost generation; management of plant-parasitic nematodes; waste water, sludge and litter application; and yield optimization. They make site visits, assess problem situations, suggest suitable agronomic tests and demonstrate proper sampling techniques. If necessary, they review test results with clients to make sure any recommended management strategies are clear and straightforward.

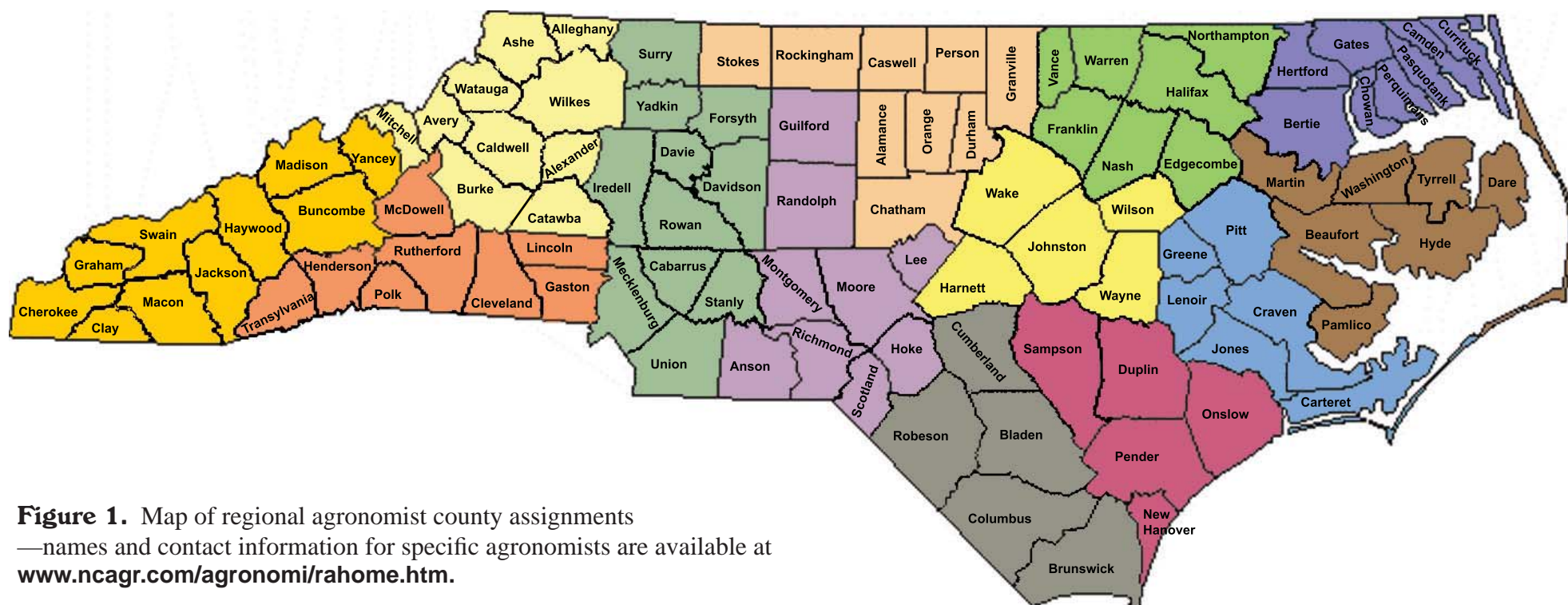


Figure 1. Map of regional agronomist county assignments
—names and contact information for specific agronomists are available at www.ncagr.com/agronomi/rahome.htm.